



Lisa Murkowski

U.S. Senator - Alaska

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eNews from Senator Lisa Murkowski

July 30, 2005

After a lot of long days and late nights, Congress passed major pieces of legislation this week – bills with huge benefits to Alaska. Before adjourning for the August recess, we finished items including major energy legislation and a highway bill. We also approved an appropriations bill that provides an additional \$1.5 billion in Veterans health care. This additional funding should help meet the Department of Veterans' Affairs shortfall in funding for medical services. That same bill also provides money to continue the Village Safe Water program and help bring clean water and sanitation to rural Alaska.

Also this week, Alaska suffered a tragedy, and I extend my condolences to the friends and families of the Boy Scout leaders who lost their loves and who were injured while volunteering at the Scout Jamboree in Virginia. The spirit of volunteerism and civic engagement is what makes Alaska one of the best places in our Nation to live and to raise a family. Ron Bitzer, Michael LaCroix, Michael Shibe and Scott Powell will be remembered as heroes for the service that they gave to the young people of Alaska.

Continue reading to find out more about the legislation Congress passed this week and what it will mean for Alaska. I hope everyone enjoys the rest of their wonderful Alaskan summer.

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Sen. Murkowski joins other Senators following final passage of the energy bill.

Congress Passes Energy Bill...

After years of hard work and previous attempts, Congress passed a bi-partisan energy bill. We set aside partisan differences to forge a bill that is balanced. It will help the nation both gain more domestic energy and develop renewable energy and alternative fuels, while advancing energy efficiency and aiding the environment. Particularly exciting are the provisions for rural Alaska as the bill authorizes \$550 million over the next decade for improvements to the state's energy infrastructure. I am also proud of the climate change title we included, the first ever crafted by Congress.

Not only is this an energy bill, it is a jobs bill. Between all of the renewable requirements, which should produce over 500,000 jobs, and the jobs likely from construction of an Alaska gas line and the opening of ANWR, we are investing in the country's labor future as well as its energy future.

Listen to Senator Murkowski's statements on the energy bill.

[Read more about the energy bill and Alaska](#)

Congress Passes Highway Bill

Another great accomplishment this week was passing the highway reauthorization bill. The bill sets federal funding for transportation projects across the country through and allocates \$425.9 million to Alaska annually. That's a 30.3% increase in a annual funding for the State.

The bill will help build and maintain roads and other transportation projects from Wrangell to Nome. A great program for rural Alaska in this bill is the authorization to plan, design, construct and maintain roads connecting remote Alaskan communities. Just as there is a need for reliable



Sen. Murkowski discusses the highway bill with Alaska Public Radio Network reporter Joel Southern

affordable energy in rural Alaska, if we are going to see increased development throughout the state, our communities need to be better connected.

I'm proud that Congress has produced an important bipartisan bill that has been long in coming. And I'm proud of the role Alaskans have played in bringing it to a conclusion. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first time all three members of the Alaska Delegation have ever been on the same conference committee for any bill, let alone a major one like this. Congressman Young deserves enormous credit for his work in leading the Transportation Committee in the House and I think Alaska is well represented in the final bill.

[Read more about the Highway bill](#)



Sen. Murkowski attends the joint session of Congress for the Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh on July 19.

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